

# THE REHEARSAL.

1. The Doctrine of Reprobation (Now set up by Dr. Edwards) is most Injurious to God.
2. Hence the Lutherans Accus'd the Calvinists of Worshipping the Devil.
3. The Justice of God Vindicated from Cruelty. And Free-will Demonstrated.
4. Yet we have no Power of our selves to Help our selves.
5. The Necessity of Grace.
6. No Excuse for those who Resist it.

WEDNESDAY, August 6. 1707.

(1.) Country-man. **Y**OU shew'd me a Great Deal of Dr. Edwards his Moderation last time, Master, which I have been tumbling over in my Mind ever since. Let the Scotch and Dutch Presbyterians Reform our Doctrine, and take away our Free-will, that is, Transform Us into something Worse than Brutes, who plainly discover a Freedom of Election in their Actions. Let them make God the Author of Sin. And His punishment of the wicked to be merely Arbitrary, to Condemn Men to Eternal Flames, for those Sins which he had put out of their Power to Avoid! Nay to Create them on Purpose to make them thus Miserable! The very Repeating it Frights me! It seems all Blasphemy to me; to Represent the Infinite Goodness and Father of Mercies, in the Colours of Cruelty it Self, that you cou'd not Exceed it in the Description of the Devil!

(2.) Rehearsal. Therefore the Lutherans have Charg'd the Calvinists with Worshipping the Devil. For, say they, we see not the Person of God, or of the Devil. Therefore we Describe them by their Qualities. And if we make God more Cruel than the Devil, we make Him worse than the Devil. And we Worship the Devil under the Name of God. For it is not the Word God that we Worship, but what we Mean by it. The Heathens did Sacrifice to Devils, and not to God, yet they call'd those Devils by the Name of Gods.

(3.) Country-m. But God is Call'd a Consuming fire and a Terrible God. Is ther not something of Cruelty in this?

Rehears. You easily Apprehend the Difference betwixt Justice and Cruelty. God is Justice, but ther is nothing of Cruelty in His Nature. Cruelty is Delighting in the Misery of another, without any Regard to a Fault

Committed. As Envy is Repining at the Prosperity of another, let him Deserve it never so well; for an Envious man cannot Endure to see any other in a better Condition than himself. But none of these can be in God.

Country-m. Now I understand. God punishes in Justice, as he is the Supreme Judge of the World. But if he made Creatures on Purpose to Damn them, this has all the Notion we can have of Cruelty. And if He put it out of their Power not to Sin, and left them no Free-Will to Chuse whether they wou'd Sin or not, I see not how this can be Reconcil'd to Justice. Therefore I think that no Creature is Capable of Sinning but what has Free-will. Sin being the Inclining of my Will to Evil and not to Good. Which if I have no Power to do, I can neither do Good nor Evil. I have no Title to Reward, nor am I lyable to Punishment. And what a Jest wou'd it be in you, if you shou'd pretend to Argue with me, to Promise or Threaten, to Perswade me to do such a thing, if you knew beforehand that it was Impossible for me to do it? Suppose you shou'd Tye me hand and foot, throw me into a Prison, and Lock the Doors fast upon me, then set Fire to it, and Preach to me in at the Window, and use most Pathetical Exhortations to me to Come out, and why wou'd I stay there to be Burn'd? And shou'd Swear to me, as I Live I dont desire your Death, nor have any Pleasure in it; And shou'd Promise me great Rewards if I wou'd come out; wou'd not this be Insulting my Misery, and the greatest Aggravation of Cruelty that is possible to be Imagin'd? Yet this is the Notion these Rigid Calvinists wou'd have us Entertain of the Goodness of God, of all His gracious Promises, and of His Threatnings to us, if we forsake not our Iniquities and Deliver our selves out

of that *Prison*, and *Bondage* of *Sin* into which we had Cast our selves, by our *Habitual Wicked Courses*.

This is the Case, as they put it. And I have made it Easie to my self to Apprehend it, by this Familiar Example I have given, that I see it before my Eyes, and *Desest* and *Abhor* it!

(4.) But still I have a Question to ask upon this Point. We say in the *Collect* for the *Second Sunday* in *Lent*, That we have no Power of our selves to Help our selves. Is not this the Case I put of the *Prison*?

*Rehears*. Yes, fully. If we Consider our Help as only from our selves. When Man had Fallen by his *Rebellion* against *God*, he was no ways Able to Deliver himself either from the Dominion of *Sin*, or from the *Prison* of *Death* to which it was Doom'd. But *Christ* our Blessed Saviour enter'd into that *Prison* in our Nature, and in our stead, and made full Satisfaction for all the Sins of that Nature; to be Apply'd to all who laid hold upon it, by a True and Lively Faith, and a sincere Repentance for their Sins. He open'd the *Prison-Doors*, and Preach'd Deliverance to All who wou'd Accept of His Salvation.

(5) And to those who are Willing, He gives the Assistance of His Grace, to help their *Infirmities*. And this is Necessary to all the Actions of our Life. Without this, we can neither do a Good Deed, nor think a Good Thought. So that all the Glory is still to Him. Yet something is still left for Us to do. We must Work with Him because He Works in us both to Will and to Do.

*Country-m.* Thus then I take it. If I Manure my Ground never so well, yet without the Sun it will not Bear. On the other hand, if I do not Prepare my Ground, the Sun will not bring a Crop I did not Sow. Nay it is the Sun too which, with my Labour, do's Prepare the Ground, and Fit it to Receive the Seed. So that in Effect all is from the Sun, both to Prepare the Earth, and Enable it to bring forth the Seed. Yet our Labour is necessary, not as what Produces any thing, but only to Remove what Hinders the Production.

Now I compare the Sun to the Grace of God, without which we can do nothing And our Working, tho' it can Produce nothing of it self, yet it Prepares the Heart to Receive the Influence of the Sun of Righteousness. So that, as St. Paul saith, he that Plants is nothing, nor he that Waters, but God who giveth the Increase. And this was the the Baptism of Repentance St. John Baptist was sent to Preach, to turn the Hearts of the Fathers to the Children, and the Heart of the Children to their Fathers, to soften the Ground of the Heart, to take out those Stones and Hard-

ness which wou'd Hinder it to Receive the Seed of the Gospel. For who are Proof against even *Natural Affection*, are Deaf to all the Charms of the Gospel. And this was truly Preparing the way to our Saviour, to Fit and Dispose Men to Receive His Self-Denying Doctrine. This is a Preventing and Preparing GRACE; which who so Resists, Nip the Seed in the Bud, and bring no Fruit to Perfection.

(6.) In vain then do these Unprofitable Servants Plead their own want of Strength as an Excuse, while they Resist that Grace which is offer'd them for an Help. Suppose I was Lame, and cou'd not go where my Life depended upon it. But then a Coach was offer'd me, with all Convenience to Carry me; and I shou'd Refuse it, Cou'd I plead my Lameness as a Defence for me? Or, which is more Absurd, cou'd I say, it was not in my Power to Accept it? Or that he who offer'd it, did not Really Intend it? All this Banter and Blasphemy these Predestinarians put upon the Great God.

#### ADVERTISEMENT S.

Sacrifice the Divine Service, from the Covenant of Grace, to the Consummation of the Mystery of Man's Redemption. By J. Scandret, Priest of the Church of England: To which is prefix'd a Letter to the Author, from the Reverend Mr. Charles Leslie; Chancellor of the Cathedral of Connor, in the Kingdom of Ireland.

Cassandra (but I hope not) telling what will come of it, 2 parts, in answer to the Occasional Letter.

The Wolf Stript of his Shepherds Cloathing in answer to a late Celebrated Book intitl'd Moderation a Vertue.

The Bishop of Salisbury's proper defence, from a Speech cry'd about the streets in his Name, and said to have been spoken by him in the House of Lords upon the Bill against Occasional Conformity.

Memoirs of the Affairs of Scotland, containing a full and Impartial Account of the Revolution in that Kingdom, begun in 1567. Faithfully Publish'd from an Authentick MS. By Her Majesty's Historiographer for the Kingdom of Scotland.

A Parallel between the Faith and Doctrine of the present Quakers, and that of the Chief Hereticks in all Ages of the Church. And also a Parallel between Quakerism and Popery.

Two Sticks made One, Or, The Devil upon Dun.

A Collection of papers concerning what hath been Transacted in the Convocation.

An Answer to some Queries, concerning Schism, Toleration, &c. In a Letter to a Friend.